

Message Text

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USNMR SHAPE
USLOSACLANT
CINCLANT
USDOCOSOUTH
USDEL MBFR VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 6493

E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJECT: DPC MEETING NOVEMBER 21: PROPOSED REDUCTION OF CONSCRIPT
SERVICE IN THE ITALIAN ARMED FORCES AND FUTURE FORCE STRUCTURE

REF: A. USNATO 2226 (NOTAL)
B. USNATO 6249 (NOTAL)
C. USNATO 6394 (NOTAL)
D. MCM-64-74 (NOTAL)
E. USDELMC 1019/74 211619Z NOV 74 (NOTAL)
F. STATE 256513 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: AT NOVEMBER 21 MEETING, DPC ENDORSED MILITARY COMMITTEE
REPORT ON PROPOSED REDUCTION OF CONSCRIPT SERVICE IN ITALIAN ARMED
FORCES (REF D) AS INTERIM ASSESSMENT PENDING LATER RE-EXAMINATION
IN CONTEXT OF ITALY'S EXPECTED RESTRUCTURING PLAN. CATALANO (ITALY)
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INFORMED DPC THAT ITALIAN DEFENSE CHIEF OF STAFF HAD BROUGHT
BEFORE MC ADDITIONAL, TEMPORARY MEASURES MADE NECESSARY FOR 1975 BY
ABNORMAL INFLATION (REF E). DE STAERCKE (BELGIUM) EXPRESSED A)
MISGIVINGS CONCERNING FIRMNESS OF LINK BETWEEN CONSCRIPT

REDUCTION AND COMPENSATORY MEASURES, B) DOUBTS AS TO WHETHER RESTRUCTURING COULD COPE WITH EFFECTS OF INFLATION, AND C) BELIEF THAT DREAM OF A EUROPEAN DEFENSE IS NOW BECOMING MYTH IN LIGHT OF GENERAL TREND OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE EFFORTS. END SUMMARY.

1. SYG LUNS OPENED DPC DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED REDUCTION OF CONSCRIPTSERVICE IN THE ITALIAN ARMED FORCES BY REFFERING BACK TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL LEONELLI'S APRIL 24, 1974 BRIEFING TO THE DPC ON THIS SUBJECT (REF A). HE THEN DREW ATTENTION TO THE MILITARY COMMITTEE'S ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED REDUCTION (REF D), STATING THAT DPC WOULD NOTE THAT MC WAS "NOT QUITE HAPPY" OVER THE PROPOSED REDUCTION, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT WOULD NOT BE ACCOMPANIED BY OFFSETTING MEASURES. HE POINTED OUT (AS HAD THE MC) THAT REDUCTION IN CONSCRIPT SERVICE AND ITALY'S RESTRUCTURING PLANS ARE CLEARLY INTERCONNECTED. UNFORTUNATELY, DPC WOULD HAVE TO ADDRESS FIRST ISSUE NOW AND SECOND ISSUE AT A LATER DATE. HE THEN INVITED CATALANO (ITALY) TO MAKE OPENING REMARKS.

2. CATALANO POINTED OUT THAT ITALY WAS NOT ALONE IN FACING PRESSURES TO REDUCE LENGHT OF CONSCRIPT SERVICE. IN ITALY, PUBLIC OPINION HAD LED TO PARLIAMENTARY INITIATIVES AIMED AT PURE AND SIMPLE REDUCTION TO 12 OR EVEN TO SIX MONTHS, WITHOUT ANY COMPENSATORY MEASURES. TO BLUNT THESE INITIATIVES, ITALIAN AUTHORITIES HAD DECIDED ON DRAFT BILL WHICH, WHILE REDUCING CONSCRIPT SERVICE TO 12 MONTHS, WOULD CONTAIN COMPENSATORY MEASURES. THESE MEASURES INCLUDE CALL UP OF DRAFTEES AT AGE 19 INSTEAD OF AGE 20, INTRODUCTION OF RESTRICTIVE RULES ON EXEMPTIONS AND DEFERMENTS, INCREASED RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS, AND REVISION OF TRAINING CYCLES. BILL PROVIDES FOR NECESSARY FUNDS TO COVER EXPENSES INHERENT IN APPLICATION OF LAW, IN ADDITION TO NORMAL DEFENSE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS. CATALANO CHARACTERIZED MC ASSESSMENT AS "OBJECTIVE JUDGMENT", WHICH ITALY IS ALREADY STUDYING. HE DREW DPC'S ATTENTION TO FACT THAT ITALIAN AUTHORITIES ARE "PERFECTLY CONVINCED" THAT COM-SECRET

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PENSATORY MEASURES IN DRAFT BILL ARE NOT SUFFICIENT IN THEMSELVES TO COUNTERACT COMPLETELY THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF REDUCED CONSCRIPT SERVICE. ONLY NEW FORCE STRUCTURE, WHICH WILL TAKE REDUCED CONSCRIPT SERVICE INTO ACCOUNT, CAN PROVIDE TRUE SOLUTION. STUDIES ON THE NEW STRUCTURE ARE ADVANCING AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. CONCERNING PERSONNEL, FUNDAMENTAL CRITERION IS TO KEEP PERMANENT PERSONNEL AT LEVEL NECESSARY TO ASSURE EFFICIENCY AND RESPONSIVENESS WHILE RESORTING TO NEW SYSTEM OF MOBILIZATION. HOWEVER, THERE IS ANOTHER PERSONNEL PROBLEM ON WHICH ITALY WILL HAVE TO BEGIN CONSULTATION SOON. CERTAIN MEASURES HAVE PROVEN NECESSARY IN ORDER TO MEET CONSEQUENCES WHICH ABNORMAL EVOLUTION OF INFLATION PROCESS HAS HAD ON DEFENSE BUDGET. URGENCY OF THESE MEASURES IS SUCH THAT DEFENSE CHIEF OF STAFF HAD DIRECTED

ITALIAN MILREP TO BRING THEM BEFORE MC TODAY, NOVEMBER 21.
PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE OCCASIONED THESE MEASURES, WHICH
WILL ONLY AFFECT FORCE LEVELS TEMPORARILY.

3. GENERAL SHAEFFER (MC) STATED HE WAS PLEASED TO SEE THAT
ITALY WAS TAKING MC'S VIEWS INTO ACCOUNT. REFERRING TO ITALIAN
MILREP'S STATEMENT TO MC EARLIER THAT MORNING CONCERNING TEM-
PORARY MEASURES FOR 1975, GENERAL SHAEFFER SAID MC WELCOMED STATE-
MENT AS FIRST STEP IN CONSULTATION PROCESS, BUT ADDED MC WAS
PROBABLY IN THE ACT OF EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE
WEAKENING OF ITALIAN ARMED FORCES.

4. KRAPF (FRG) SAID HE HAD RECEIVED INDICATION THAT ITALIANS
INTENDED TO REDUCE ARMY BY 25,000. WAS THAT FUGURE CORRECT?

5. CATALANO REPLIED HE COULD NOT GIVE ANY DETAILS OR EXACT
FIGURES CONCERNING TEMPORARY MEASURES, BUT ADDED THAT TEMPORARY
PERSONNEL REDUCTIONS ARE PREFERABLE TO AN ATTACK ON OTHER
PROGRAMS.

6. LUNS SAID THAT LAST WEEK HE HAD HAD NINETY MINUTE CONVER-
SATION WITH ITALIAN MOD ANDREOTTI, WHO TOLD HIM ITALY WAS CON-
SIDERING REDUCING THOSE ELEMENTS WHICH WOULD NOT AFFECT COMBAT
EFFECTIVENESS OF ITALIAN ARMY. MOD HAD SAID THAT, WHILE HE
COULD NOT GIVE DETAILS, ITALY WAS TRYING TO TRIM FAT FROM
MUSCLE, AND WOULD INFORM NATO OF WHAT IT MIGHT DO AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE. LUNS ADDED THAT WHILE IN LONDON FOR THE NORTH ATLANTIC
ASSEMBLY MEETING HE RECEIVED CONFIRMATION THAT HMG WOULD LAY
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RESTRUCTURING PLANS BEFORE NATO PRIOR TO GOING TO PARLIAMENT.

7. AT THIS POINT, DESTAERCKE (BELGIUM) MADE MAJOR INTER-
VENTION. HE PREFACED HIS REMARKS BY STATING THAT HE DID NOT
INTEND THEM TO BE CRITICAL; HIGH IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE
PROMPTED THEM. REFERRING TO ITALY AS THE LARGEST MEDITERRANEAN
MEMBER OF NATO, DISCOUNTING FRANCE WHICH DOES NOT PARTICIPATE
IN NATO DEFENSE, HE CITED ITALY'S KEY ROLE ON THE SOUTHERN
FLANK. ITALY WOULD BE SURPRISED AT ANY LACK OF INTEREST FROM
ITS ALLIES. DE STAERCKE THEN MADE THREE POINTS:

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SECDEF WASHDC

INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS 4723

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

USLOSACLANT

CINCLANT

USDOCOSOUTH

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

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A) HE SAID HIS FIRST QUESTION WENT TO HEART OF MATTER, AND HE FEARED ANSWER HE MIGHT GET. HE SET STAGE FOR QUESTION BY REFERRING TO BELGIUM'S PLAN TO REDUCE LENGTH OF CONSCRIPT SERVICE. BELGIAN "LOI CADRE" MADE CLEAR TO PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENT THAT CONSCRIPT SERVICE REDUCTIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE ONLY AFTER COMPENSATORY MEASURES HAD TAKEN EFFECT. BELGIUM'S PLANS HAD BEEN OBJECT OF MOST SEARCHING EXAMINATION, PARTICULARLY IN DRC MULTILATERAL REVIEW, WHERE, IN HIS VIEW, SHAPE CRITICISM HAD BEEN UNFAIR IN FORM IF NOT IN SUBSTANCE. THIS EXAMINATION HAD CENTERED ON COMPENSATORY MEASURES. HIS QUESTION TO THE ITALIAN REP WAS; IS PROPOSED REDUCTION IN CONSCRIPT SERVICE FIRMLY LINKED TO COMPENSATORY MEASURES IN ITALY'S PLAN?

B) DE STAERCKE NOTED THAT MINISTERS WOULD DISCUSS IMPACT OF INFLATION ON THE ALLIANCE AT THE FORTHCOMING NAC. AFTER ACKNOWLEDGING SEVERE INFLATION RAVAGING ITALY, HE ASKED WHETHER ANY RESTRUCTURING PLAN COULD COPE WITH SUCH INFLATION? HE IMPLIED THAT INFLATION WOULD SIMPLY ERODE ANY POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF RESTRUCTURING AND ASKED, IS MUSCLE GOING SECRET

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TO DISAPPEAR?

C) PREFACING HIS FINAL REMARK AS POLITICAL, DE STAERCKE TURNED TO ISSUE OF A EUROPEAN DEFENSE. HE SAID THAT THE IDEA OF A EUROPEAN DEFENSE, ONCE ADREAM, WAS NOW BECOMING A MYTH. HE ASKED WHAT EUROPEANS, ESPECIALLY EUROGROUP, CAN DO ABOUT THE GENERAL TREND TOWARD INCREASING COLLAPSE OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE EFFORTS. ALTHOUGH HE CITED GREEK WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO, AND WEAKNESS ON THE SOUTHERN FLANK, HE QUICKLY POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS NOT JUST ITALY THAT STOOD ACCUSED, BUT ALL EUROPEAN ALLIES. IN PRESENT ATMOSPHERE, REDUCTIONS OF SIZE ENVISAGED IN MBFR MAY PROVE INCONSEQUENTIAL.

8. CATALANO REPLIED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD DE STAERCKE'S CONCERN AND INTEREST. CONCERNING DE STAERCKE'S FIRST QUESTION, WHILE ITALY'S DRAFT BILL WAS NOT DESIGNED AS A LOI-CADRE, IT AMOUNTED TO SAME THING. DRAFT BILL INCLUDED PROVISION FOR NECESSARY FUNDS

FOR COMPENSATORY MEASURES. PARLIAMENT COULD NOT PASS BILL INTO LAW WITHOUT APPROVING PROVISION FOR NECESSARY FUNDS. MISSION COMMENT: DE STAERCKE'S QUESTION WENT BEYOND PROVISION OF FUNDS AND CONCERNED ACTUAL REALIZATION OF EFFECTS OF COMPENSATORY MEASURES BEFORE REDUCTION IN CONSCRIPT SERVICE. CATALANO'S ANSWER WAS NOT REASSURING. END MISSION COMMENT. CONCERNING RESTRUCTURING, CATALANO POINTED OUT THAT RESSTRUCTURING WAS NOT BASED SOLELY ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND RESTRUCTURING BENEFITS WERE NOT TIED SOLELY TO INFLATION. FINALLY, HE SHARED DE STAERCKE'S VIEW ON DETERIORATING PROSPECTS FOR EUROPEAN DEFENSE.

9. LUNS OFFERED VIEW THAT DANISH SYSTEM (INDEXIZATION) WAS THE ONLY VALID ONE. WHILE LEVEL OF DANISH DEFENSE EFFORT WAS NOT PARTICULARLY COMMENDABLE, THEIR PLANNING SYSTEM WAS. MISSION COMMENT: LUNS WAS REFERRING TO THE DANISH AGREEMENT ON A FOUR YEAR DEFENSE BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK PROVIDING FOR GRADUAL INCREASES OVER PERIOD, WITH FURTHER PROVISIONS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF INCREASES IN PRICES AND WAGES. END MISSION COMMENT. LUNS ALSO UNDERLINED EFFECT OF INFLATION IN ITALY. WHILE ITALIANS HAD RAISED THEIR 1975 DEFENSE BUDGET 22.6 PERCENT OVER THE 1974 BUDGET, INFLATIONS HAD SWEEPED ADDITIONAL FUNDS AWAY.

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10. MCAULIFFE (US) SAID THAT, UNDER INSTRUCTIONS (REFS B AND F), HE SUPPORTED GENERAL THRUST OF MC'S RECOMMENDATIONS. WITH RESPECT TO FIRST RECOMMENDATION, HE SUGGESTED ITALIAN AUTHORITIES EMPHASIZE FORCE GOALS RELATED TO BASIC ISSUES. HE ADDED THAT MC REPORT RIGHTLY POINTED OUT THAT REDUCTION IN CONSCRIPT SERVICE AND PLANNED FUTURE RESTRUCTURING ARE PLAINLY INTERCONNECTED AND THAT BUDGET IMPLICATIONS OF REDUCTION ON OTHER AREAS, ESPECIALLY MODERNIZATION, ARE NOT YET CLEAR. HE TRUSTED ITALIAN AUTHORITIES WOULD CONTINUE CONSULTATIONS, PROVIDING INFORMATION ON TIMELY BASIS SO NATO AND OTHER ALLIED GOVERNMENTS CAN EXAMINE ITALIAN FORCE PLANS FULLY AND ASSESS COMPLETELY PROPER BALANCE AMONG PERSONNEL, FORCE STRUCTURE, AND EQUIPMENT MODERNIZATION. CONTINUING, BUT ON PERSONAL BASIS, MCAULIFFE STATED HE HAD BEEN SURPRISED TO HEAR OF ADDITIONAL, TEMPORARY MEASURES BROUGHT BEFORE MC. WHILE DPC COULD NOT YET DISCUSS THESE MEASURES, PERSONNEL NUMBERS INVOLVED APPEARED TO BE SIGNIFICANT. FURTHER, HE COULD SUBSCRIBE TO DE STAERCKE'S VIEWS. THE DOYEN'S REMARKS HAD BEEN ORIENTED ON EUROPEAN DEFENSE, BUT US THINKS MORE IN TERMS OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY. IN THIS REGARD, US HAS STRESSED NEED TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE CONVENTIONAL FORCES. SECDEF SCHLESINGER IS CURRENTLY TRYING TO DEAL WITH ASPECT OF NUNN AMENDMENT REQUIRING REDUCTION OF 18,000 SUPPORT TROOPS IN EUROPE. SECDEF HAS AUTHORITY TO REPLACE WITHDRAWN SUPPORT TROOPS WITH COMBAT TROOPS AND IS TRYING TO DO SO; HOWEVER, MCAULIFFE COULD NOT SAY FURTHER ON THIS MATTER AT PRESENT. NEXT, MCAULIFFE REFERRED TO APPARENT

60,000 MAN REDUCTION IN ITALIAN ARMY (REF C). HE WAS NOT PRESSING FOR ANSWER AT PRESENT MEETING, BUT CONFUSION ON THIS MATTER UNDERSCORED NEED FOR CONSULTATION. REDUCTION OF THIS SIZE EQUALS ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF TOTAL REDUCTION NATO ENVISAGES OF GROUND FORCES IN NGA TO ARRIVE AT COMMON CEILING IN MBFR. SUCH STRAIGHTFORWARD REDUCTION, WITHOUT RESTRUCTURING, WILL TAKE A GOOD DEAL OF EXPLAINING TO PUBLIC, PARLIAMENT, AND PRESS, ESPECIALLY IN US. HE WAS VERY CONSCIOUS OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN ITALY, BUT WONDERED "WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE GOING."

11. CATALANO REPLIED HE TOO WAS SOMETIMES BAFLED BY QUESTION OF NUMBERS. AS VERY UNOFFICIAL AND TENTATIVE ANSWER TO APPARENT 60,000 MAN REDUCTION, HE POINTED OUT THAT CONSCRIPT CALL-UP ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 1974 WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE JANUARY 15, 1975. MISSION COMMENT: CATALANO DID NOT POINT OUT SECRET

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HOW THIS MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT DOVETAIL WITH RELEASE OF CONSCRIPTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED REQUIRED SERVICE. END MISSION COMMENT. CATALANO STATED HE HAD NOTHING TO ADD TO THE LARGER ISSUES, SAVE TO HOPE NATO WOULD FIND A COLLECTIVE ANSWER. ITALY WAS STUDYING US EXAMPLE OF REDUCING SUPPORT STRENGTH WHILE INCREASING COMBAT STRENGTH, TO SEE IF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR ITALY'S ARMED FORCES.

12. LUNS THEN ASKED WHETHER DPC COULD CONSTRUCTIVELY COMMENT ON CONSCRIPT REDUCTION IN ADVANCE OF DETAILS ON RESTRUCTURING. CATALANO ANSWERED THAT TWO ISSUES WERE SEPARATE. ITALY NEEDED VIEWS ON CONSCRIPT REDUCTION RIGHT AWAY. NATO COULD RE-EXAMINE THESE VIEWS DURING FUTURE CONSULTATIONS ON RESTRUCTURING. HARTOGH (NETHERLANDS) NOTED THAT ONCE DRAFT BILL BECAME LAW, THERE WAS LITTLE NATO COULD DO ABOUT IT. HOWEVER, HE AGREED NATO SHOULD ACCEPT MC REPORT TODAY, MAKING CLEAR THIS IS ONLY INITIAL ASSESSMENT.

13. LUNS SAID THEN DPC SHOULD ENDORSE MC ASSESSMENT, WHICH HE WOULD FORWARD FORMALLY TO ITALIAN AUTHORITIES, AND MC SHOULD BEGIN ASSESSMENT OF FURTHER MEASURES BRIEFED EARLIER THAT MORNING. CATALANO POINTED OUT THESE FURTHER MEASURES WERE TEMPORARY, APPLYING ONLY TO 1975, AND THEREFORE HE FORESAW NO COMPENSATORY MEASURES.

14. LUNS CONCLUDED MEETING BY STATING DPC AGREED TO MC INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF ONE ELEMENT OF TOTAL PROGRAM AND HAD ADDRESSED ONLY COMPENSATORY MEASURES ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCTION IN CONSCRIPT SERVICE. WHEN NATO TAKES UP ITALIAN RESTRUCTURING PLAN, IT WILL SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE TO COMPENSATE FURTHER FOR CONSCRIPT LAW'S EFFECTS. MCAULIFFE

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